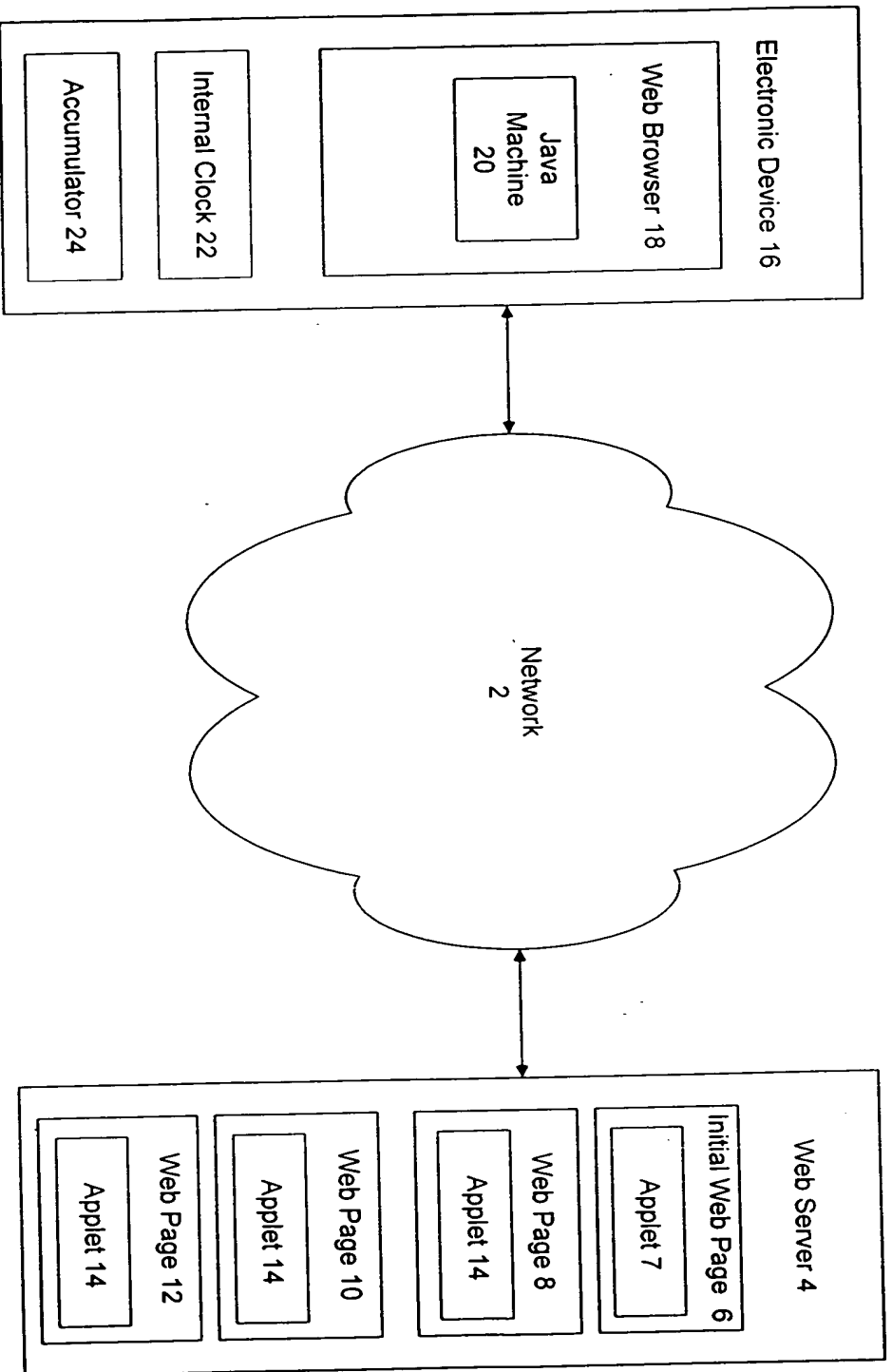


Figure 1



1/6

Page 1 of 1

Figure 2

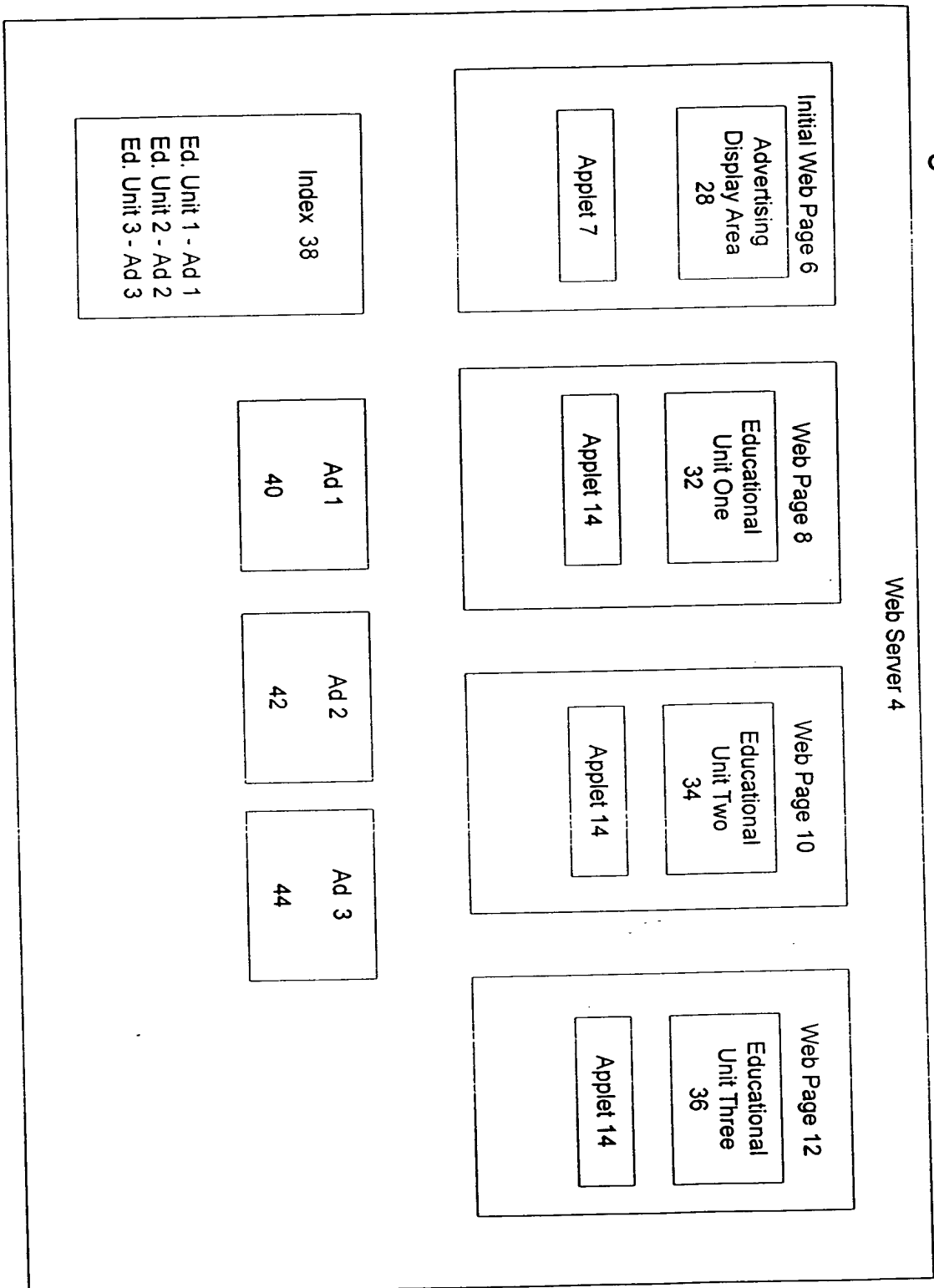


Figure 3

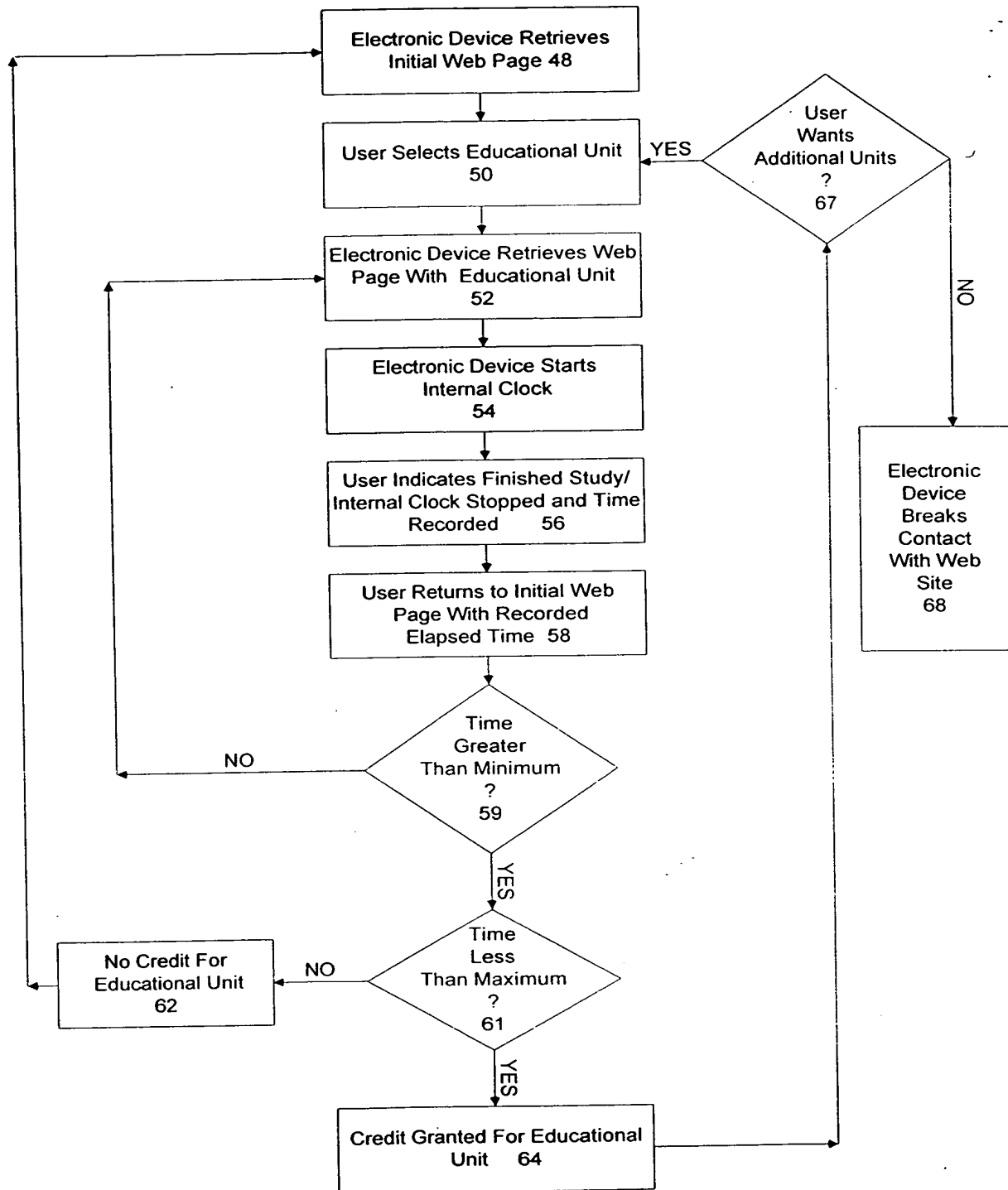
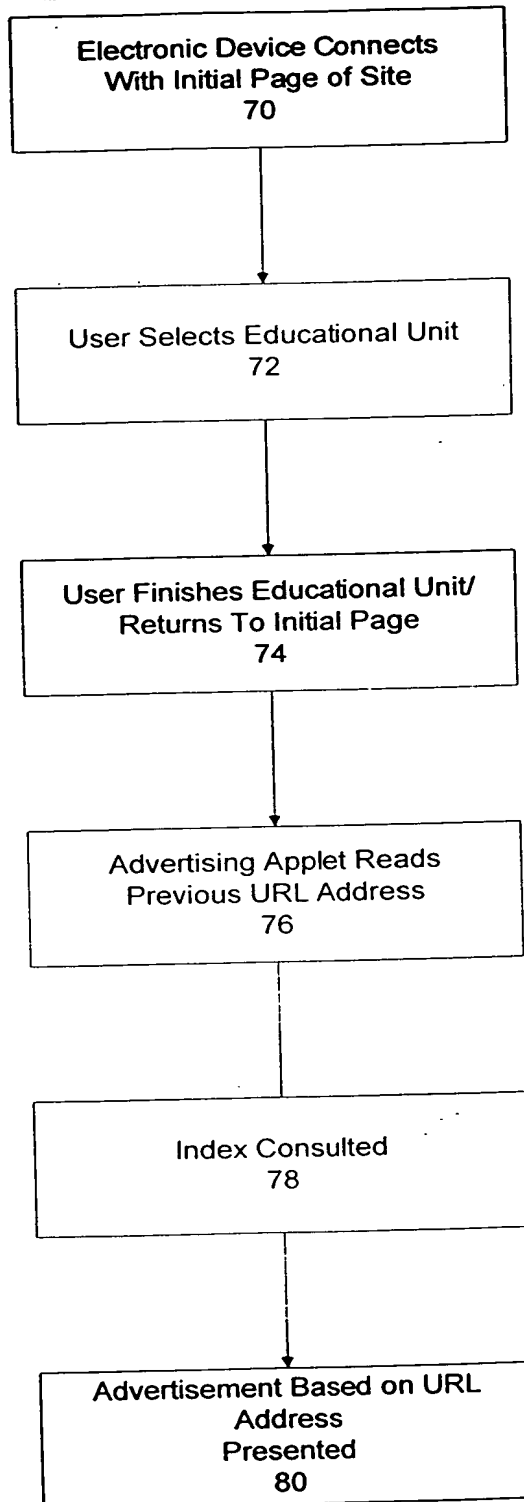
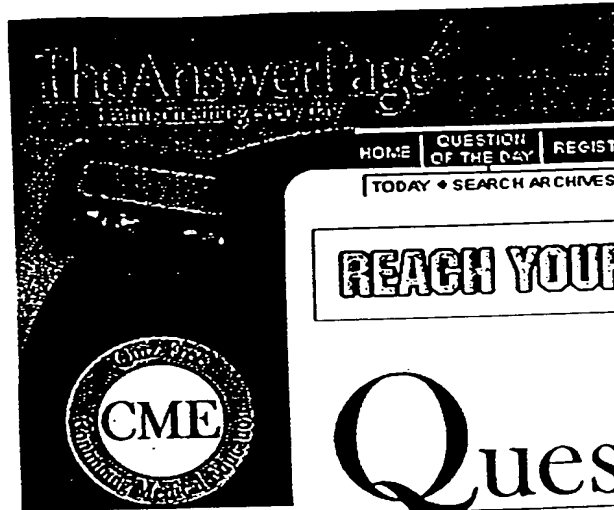


Figure 4



5/6

Figure 5



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We continue our discussion of headache, beginning today a series of questions concerning cluster headache.

1. What is a cluster headache?
2. What is the typical "cluster period?"
3. During a cluster period, does the pain switch sides or remain only on one side?

Click here
 for our **Answer**
 of the day.

Previous Day's Question

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616

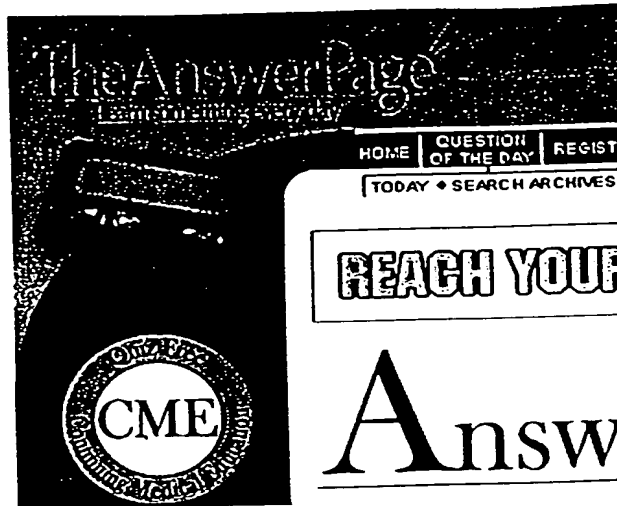


Figure 6

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What is a cluster headache?

Cluster headaches are defined by the International Association of the Study for Pain as an unilateral attack of pain in the head or neck recurring in separate incidents with daily or almost daily attacks for weeks to months at a time (1). It is usually associated with ipsilateral tearing, rhinorrhea, conjunctival redness, photophobia, and nasal stuffiness and photophobia. Occasionally, patients have ipsilateral miosis or ptosis.

The pain is described as being *excruciating and severe*. It is usually constant, throbbing and even burning in nature. Patients often can't stay in one place and are "pacing the floor" or "banging their head on the wall" during an attack. They never seem to lay down due to the constant nature of the pain and the lack of relief from being recumbent.

The most common site of the pain is ocular, frontal or temporal. The pain is also the worst in the ocular or periocular area. The pain can also occur much less frequently in the infraorbital area, the ipsilateral upper teeth, the occipital area, or the neck and shoulder.

What is the typical "cluster period?"

Cluster headaches are clustered in periods of several weeks to months. The most common periods last 4-12 weeks, but they range from 1 to 52 weeks. They typical patient has one cluster period every 6-18 months. Each cluster usually involves 1-3 attacks lasting from 30-120 minutes during each day of the cluster period. Attacks can skip a day or two during the cluster period. Again typically, the attacks occur during the night.

During a cluster period, does the pain switch sides or remain only on